A decorative border of green palm trees surrounds the text. The border is composed of a single row of palm trees along the top and bottom edges, and two vertical columns of palm trees along the left and right edges.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide US soldiers who deploy to Saudi Arabia with some basic information about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the city of Riyadh. As invited guests of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, American soldiers should be aware of the customs and courtesies that are part of the everyday life of Saudi people. This booklet will supply some of that basic cultural information, and briefly describe the country of Saudi Arabia. This booklet will also provide information on Riyadh to assist the incoming soldier.

This booklet is not, and was not meant to be, a comprehensive guide. Such a publication would require many more pages of information and a more extensive coverage of each subject area. Rather, the intent is to provide a quick overview of the most important aspects of Saudi life in a compact format. We hope this will help American soldiers understand the people and the country of Saudi Arabia, and serve as a basic guide to the country.

ARGENT-SA



CULTURAL ORIENTATION HANDBOOK



For Incoming Personnel

Welcome to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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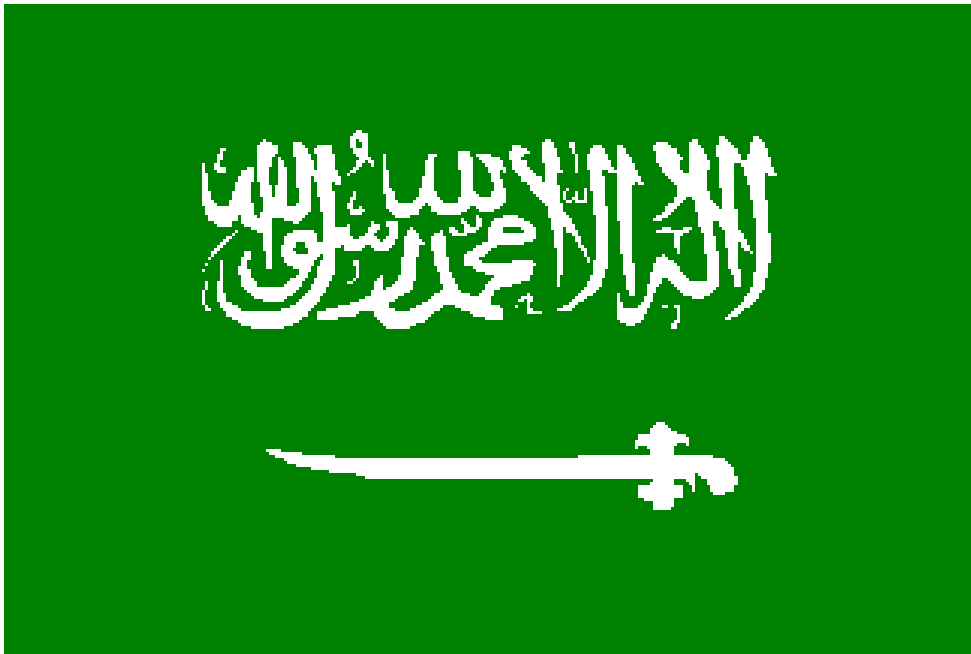
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MIDDLE EAST



SAUDI ARABIA



The Saudi Flag is green and bears the Muslim creed "There is no god but God: Muhammad is the Messenger of God." The official emblem is a date palm, representing vitality and growth, and two crossed swords, symbolizing justice and strength rooted in faith. Green is the traditional color of Islam.

UNITS



ARCENT-The mission of the United States Army Forces Central Command – Saudi Arabia (ARCENT-SA) a major deployed subordinate element of the United States Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT): is to maintain a forward presence in the Area of Responsibility (AOR); exercise command, control, and force protection over assigned and attached Army forces in Saudi Arabia; provide installation services for Army and other U.S. forces and agencies in Saudi Arabia; and maintain liaison with principals in the AOR. On order, ARCENT-SA will receive, stage, onward move, and integrate forces deploying to Saudi Arabia. On order, ARCENT-SA also transitions to the ARCENT-Rear headquarters.



4409th AIR BASE GROUP(PROVISIONAL) – Provides first-class customer service to the coalition forces in the Eskan Village-Riyadh area. As part of its daily operations, the 4409th ABG provides force protection, maintains much of the installation infrastructure, ensures lines of communication are kept open, and gives logistical support throughout the area of operation.



JOINT TASK FORCE SOUTHWEST ASIA – Performs the Operation Southern Watch mission of monitoring and controlling airspace south of the 33rd parallel in Iraq. The role of the coalition forces is to monitor compliance with UN Security Council resolutions. JTFSWA includes Americans, British, French and Saudi Arabian forces.



UNITED STATES MILITARY TRAINING MISSION – Advises and assists the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces through Security Assistance efforts in developing, training and sustaining capable deterrent and self defense forces for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to facilitate regional security.



OFFICES OF THE PROGRAM MANAGER FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE WITH THE SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL GUARD – Administers, directs and controls the US Security Assistance Program for the SANG. Develops, manages and oversees training, equipment, construction and medical modernization tasks. Performs advanced echelon and augmentation tasks for Army Material Command and USCENCOM as required.

RIYADH WEATHER



MONTH	AVG HIGH	AVG LOW	AVG RAIN
JANUARY	67F/19C	48F/9C	0.5INCHES
FEBRUARY	73F/23C	52F/11C	0.4 INCHES
MARCH	80F/27C	60F/16C	1.2 INCHES
APRIL	90F/32C	68F/20C	1.2 INCHES
MAY	101F/38C	78F/26C	0.5 INCHES
JUNE	106F/41C	81F/27C	0.0 INCHES
JULY	109F/43C	84F/29C	0.0 INCHES
AUGUST	108F/42C	83F/28C	0.0 INCHES
SEPTEMBER	104F/40C	78F/26C	0.0 INCHES
OCTOBER	94F/34C	69F/21C	0.0 INCHES
NOVEMBER	81F/27C	59F/15C	0.2 INCHES
DECEMBER	71F/22C	52F/11C	0.4 INCHES

SAUDI ARABIA FACTS

Location: Most of the Arabian Peninsula, bordering the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea.

Area: Land Area - 1,960,582 sq km. Saudi Arabia has no permanent rivers or lakes.

Climate: Mostly harsh desert with extremes in temperature.

Terrain: Mostly uninhabited desert.

Environmental Issues: 1) Desertification.
2) Depletion of underground water resources.
3) Development of sea-water desalinization plants.
4) Coastal pollution from oil spills.

Population: 20,087,965 (1997 est.), includes 5,000,000 third country nationals (1997 est)

Religion: Muslim 100%

Languages: Arabic.

Type of Government: Monarchy

National Capital: Riyadh

Other Major Cities: Jiddah, Makkah (Mecca), Taif, Dammam, Medinah, Tabuk.

Independence: 23 September, 1932.

Executive Branch: *Chief of State:* King FAHD bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (13 June 1982)
Cabinet: Council of ministers is appointed by the King and includes many royal family members.
Elections: None

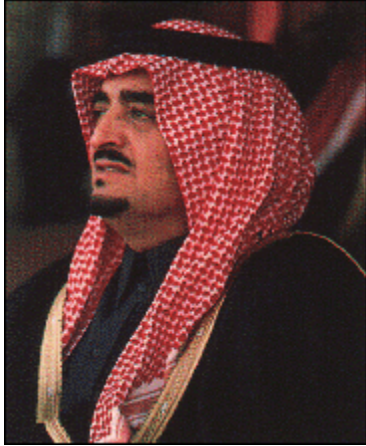
Legislative Branch: A Consultative Council (60 members and a chairman appointed by the King for four year terms).

Political Parties: None allowed.

Industries: Crude oil production, petroleum refining, basic petrochemicals, cement, construction, fertilizer, plastics.

U.S. Embassy: Address: U.S. Embassy
P.O. Box 94309
Riyadh 11693
Phone: 966-1-488-3800

THE MONARCHY OF SAUDI ARABIA



KING FAHD, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, 5TH King of Saudi Arabia since the modern founding by his father, King Saud. He began his reign in 1982.



Prince ABDULLAH Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, First Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He assumed the duty of Crown Prince in 1982, and he is next in line to King Fahd.



Prince SULTAN Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the Second Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Aviation and Inspector-General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

ISLAM

In Arabic, the word "Islam" means "submission" and also derives from the word meaning "peace." The practice of Islam involves complete submission to the will of God. Approximately a fifth of the world's population is Muslim, with only 18% living in the Arab world. The world's largest Muslim community is in Indonesia, while most of Africa and a large portion of Asia are Muslim. There is also a significant number of Muslims in the former Soviet Union, China, North and South America, and Europe. The Muslim faith is monotheist. They believe in the same God as Christians and Jews. They believe in a chain of prophets starting with Adam and including Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Jonah, and Jesus among others. However, Muslims believe that God's final message was given to one man, Muhammad.

Muhammad

Muhammad was born in Makkah in the year 570. After the death of his parents, he was raised by his uncle, Abu Talib. Abu Talib was a merchant of the Quraish tribe and he taught Muhammad to be a trader also. However, Muhammad became disenchanted with the practice of idolatry, the religion of his tribe, and began looking for a true religion.

At the age of 25, he married Khadija, a rich widower 15 years his senior. Without the time constraints of running a business, Muhammad spent much time in the desert to meditate and pray. In the year 610, at the age of 40, the Angel Gabriel came down from heaven to Mount Hira, where Muhammad was meditating and dictated the word of God to Muhammad. It is called the Night of Power. After this revelation, he began preaching against the idolatry of the people of Makkah, and in 622, he was forced to flee to Medina, an act known as the hijra. After several years and many battles, Muhammad was able to return to his city of birth as a victor in 630. By the time of his death two years later, Islam had already spread to the greater part of the Arabian peninsula.

The Spread of Islam

Islam spread quickly throughout the Arabian peninsula and into Europe. In 634 Muslims invaded Jerusalem, and Syria fell in 636. 5 years later, Egypt, Iran, and Iraq all were defeated. Within 100 years of Muhammad's death, Islam had spread from Spain in the west and India in the east, comprising more territory than the Roman Empire.

The Qur'an

According to Muslims, the Qur'an is the exact words revealed to the prophet Muhammad by Gabriel. It was memorized by Muhammad and was written down by scribes during his lifetime. Not one word has been changed over the centuries, and Muslims believe the language of the Qur'an is the perfect language. The Qur'an is the guide for Muslims. It teaches wisdom, worship, law and provides guidelines for humans to follow.

5 PILLARS OF ISLAM

1. Profession of faith (Shahada): "There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Prophet"
2. Prayer (Salat): 5 times daily; it reminds Muslims of their faith and helps lead them on the path of righteousness.
3. Fasting (Sawm): Observed during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan. This involves abstinence from eating, drinking, smoking, and intercourse. Do not offer a Muslim food, drink, or a cigarette during Ramadan and be respectful by not eating or drinking in front of them.
4. Purification of Wealth (Zakat): This requires an annual giving of a fixed amount of income to the less fortunate for the benefit of the community.
5. Pilgrimage (Hajj): All Muslims should perform a Hajj to Makkah (Mecca) at least once in their lifetimes if circumstances permit.

THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR

The Islamic calendar is computed from the flight of Muhammed from Mecca to Medina in the year 622. (hejira) The calendar is lunar and lasts 354 days. The months begin with the first crescent of the moon and alternately contain 30 or 29 days as follows:

Muharram
Safar
Rabi I
Rabi II
Jumada I
Jumada II
Rajab
Shaban
Ramadan
Shawwal
Dhu al-Qada
Dhu al-Hijjah

The week begins on sundown of al-Jumah. The business week runs from Saturday to Wednesday. Thursday and Friday is the weekend. The Islamic calendar is used solely for religious purposes. Solar calendars are used for business and international affairs.

Days of the Week

Sunday	Yom al-ahad
Monday	Yom al-ithnain
Tuesday	Yom al-thalatha
Wednesday	Yom al-arba'a
Thursday	Yom al-khamees
Friday	Yom al-jumah
Saturday	Yom al-sabt

Time

Saudi Arabian time is GMT+3 hours.

MODERN HISTORY OF SAUDI ARABIA

The modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was formed by King Abd al-Aziz IBN SAUD. In 1902, Ibn Saud recaptured the Al-Saud's ancient capital of Riyadh from a rival family. From 1913-1926, Ibn Saud conquered other parts of the Arabian Peninsula. In 1932, he united these separate regions into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as an Islamic State, with the Holy Quran as its constitution.

Downtown Riyadh where Ibn Saud's first center of government was located.



Oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in the 1920's by American geologists, but large-scale production and development did not begin until after World War II. Saudi oil reserves are the largest in the world, and this oil wealth has made possible the rapid expansion and economic development that has transformed Saudi Arabia from a primitive nomadic culture into a modern industrial state.

SAUDI ARABIA CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

GREETINGS

DO:

- Shake hands (always offering your right hand; the left hand is considered unclean) whenever you meet or take leave of an Arab.
- Grasp the hand very loosely, not a hard western handshake.
- Shake hands with everyone in the room when you enter or depart.
- Learn a few of the common Arabic greetings and use them. Arabs are happy when you use their language, even if you only know a few expressions.
- Feel free to return a hug or kiss on the cheek, initiated by an Arab man. These are signs of friendship, not homosexuality.

DO NOT

- Use an Arab greeting unless you are sure how to use it correctly.
- Hug or kiss an Arab unless you are sure he is a close friend or he initiates.



CONVERSATION

DO:

- Open the conversation with small talk and pleasantries.
- Follow the conversational lead of the Arab; discuss what he brings up.
- Talk to the Arab as an equal.
- Avoid arguments.
- Place your feet flat on the floor if you are sitting in a chair, or fold them under you if you are sitting on the floor.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Look for subtle or double meanings in what an Arab says. Arabs often answer indirectly.

DO NOT:

- Show impatience or undue haste.
- Ask direct personal questions, especially about female family members of an Arab.
- Discuss political subjects.
- Discuss religion unless you know what you are talking about.
- Try to convert a Muslim to your faith, or point out problems with their religion.
- Patronize or talk down to an Arab, even if he does not speak English well.
- Say "no" when an Arab asks a favor of you, or admit you do not know the answer to a question. (Instead, say you will look into it, or take it up with your superiors.)
- Avoid eye contact.
- Move away from an Arab who stands close to you during conversation. It is customary for Arabs to stand about one foot apart to size up each other before entering a business or personal relationship. Touching or patting may be part of this process.
- Point the soles of your feet at an Arab when you are sitting with him. This implies you are placing him under your feet, an insult.
- Be offended when an Arab shows great interest in your social, personal, professional and academic background. He may ask about your salary, what you paid for your clothes, etc. He is assessing you before accepting you as a friend or business associate. Arabs do not enter personal or business relationships casually or lightly as we do in Western culture.

RELIGION

GENERAL

The Islamic religion is the single most important factor in Saudi Arabian life and culture. It is not only a religion; it is a way of life.

Permanent residents of Saudi Arabia must be Muslims. No public worship of any other religion is permitted. To deface any religious object or defame any portion of the Islamic religion is a grievous offense. To deny the Islamic faith is punishable by death.

There are religious policemen, called Matawa, that walk around town with regular policemen looking for violations of religious law. If a Matawa tells you something, do not argue as you can be punished according to Saudi law.

DO NOT:

- Enter a mosque or the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah if you are not a Muslim. (**See ARCENT Policy Letter Number 19**)
- Stay on the downtown streets during prayer times, especially near the Great Mosque and Fort areas.
- Pass in front of a prayer rug during prayers.
- Stare at Muslims praying or take photographs of them praying.
- Offer food, beverages, or tobacco products to Muslims in the hours of fasting during the month of Ramadan.
- Eat smoke, or drink anything in public or in vehicles during the day in the holy month of Ramadan.
- Drive near a mosque during the Arab weekend (Thursday and Friday.)
- Display a crucifix or star of David in public, even as jewelry.
- Distribute non-Muslim religious literature.
- Criticize Islam in any way.



HOSPITALITY

GENERAL

Arab host-guest rules apply not only within the home but also to chance meetings in restaurants and casual invitations to lunch. The inviter is always the host. If you meet by chance in a café or restaurant, the person already there is the host and usually pays the bill. "Splitting the bill" is contrary to Arab custom.

AS A GUEST DO:

- Arrive on time and expect a meal if you are invited to an Arab home. Arabs will usually give approximate times but will welcome guests warmly whenever they arrive.
- Understand that if your wife or a female friend accompanies you, she may be separated from you during the visit to join the women in their living area.
- Always use your right hand in eating, drinking, offering, passing, or receiving anything.
- Try all the different foods offered you.
- Fill your plate and eat everything with gusto.
- Take seconds, even if only a small amount. It is a compliment to your host.
- Compliment your host on the food, and wish him always a full table.
- Take your leave promptly after the second or third round of coffee or tea after the meal. Arabs socialize and converse before the meal, not after.
- Thank the host profusely for his hospitality and good conversation.
- Plan to return hospitality.

AS A GUEST DO NOT:

- Feel obligated to bring a gift. If you do bring a gift, make it a gift for the children.
- Praise too much any possession of your host; he may give it to you. If he does, you are expected to give something in return.
- Linger long after a meal as we do in Western culture.

WOMEN

GENERAL

Arab women have a protected role, symbolized by the veil they wear. As part of this role, their participation in public life is clearly limited. Muslims believe open social relations between the sexes result in the breakdown of family life. Contact between men and women, therefore, is rigidly controlled.

For example, women in Saudi Arabia do not normally drive automobiles. Dancing in public and mixed swimming/bathing are forbidden as well.

If you are a male guest in an Arab's home, you are not likely to see any female members of the family. With very little exception, women do not interact with men outside their family.

IF YOU ARE A MAN DO NOT:

- Try to date an Arab woman.
- Try to engage an Arab woman in conversation unless you have been formally introduced.
- Stare at Arab women or maintain eye contact with them.
- Talk in public to professional women, even non-Saudi women, except on business.
- Kiss, touch, or show affection toward any woman in public, including a non-Saudi woman.
- Ask an Arab direct questions about his wife or other female members of his family.
- Expect an Arab to introduce you to any veiled woman who accompanies him.

IF YOU ARE A WOMAN DO:

- Dress in a manner acceptable to Arabs. Uniforms authorized for US Armed Forces are always correct. It is ARCENT policy for all female personnel to wear an Abaya while traveling off post. Western women are not expected to wear veils, but a head scarf should be carried at all times. In a compound or US facility, wear what you like.
- Expect to ride in the back of public busses.
- Expect to be excluded from some stores.

IF YOU ARE A WOMAN DO NOT:

- Wear pants in public unless they are part of your authorized uniform as a member of the Armed Forces.
- Wear tight or revealing clothes in public

WORKING WITH ARABS

DO:

- Sincerely greet the Arabs you will work with and see to their comfort before tackling the mission.
- Respect the individual dignity of all Arabs and be polite to them at all times.
- Maintain an attitude of patience and quiet strength.
- Train officers and enlisted men separately if you can.
- Refer any serious problem to an Arab leader.

DO NOT:

- Criticize an Arab. If corrective guidance is needed, give it privately and positively.
- Overpraise an Arab in front of others.
- Lose your temper.
- Expect Arabs to be punctual for business meetings. (An appointment for 1000 could mean about 1030 in most situations. In the military most leaders now appreciate and practice punctuality.)

GESTURES

- Touching noses together three times. This is an old Bedouin gesture of greeting that shows friendship and respect.
- Kissing your own right hand, then raising your eyes, and your right hand. This means "Thank You."
- Placing the palm of the right hand on the chest right after shaking hands with another man. It is often used in refusing food, in which case the heart is patted several times. A slight bow of the head may be added.
- Touching the fingertips of your right hand to your forehead while bowing the head slightly. This is a gesture of deep respect.
- Placing the right hand or forefinger on the tip of the nose, right-lower eyelid, top of the head, mustache or beard. This means "I see it," "It is on my mind," or "It is my responsibility."
- Making the "OK" sign, as used in Western culture. In the Arab world this means the "evil eye" and is often used with curses. It can also mean "perfect" if held at chest level and used when talking about something good. Do not use this gesture because it can be easily misinterpreted.
- Holding the right hand in front of the face, palm in, then flipping the hand so the palm is up. This means "No."
- Pointing the index finger at someone, or beckoning with it. This shows contempt for the person beckoned or pointed at, as if he were an animal. Do not use this gesture.

USEFUL WORDS

Airplane	Ta'ira
Airport	Mataar
Bank	Bank
Bread	khubz
Car	Sayyara
Cloak	Abiah
Do you Speak English	Atata kallum ingleezia?
Friend	Sadeek
Friend (F)	Sadeeka
Gift	Hadiyya
Good-bye	Ma'as salaama
Good Evening	Massaa il Kayr
Good Morning	Sabaah il Kayr
Hello; Welcome	Marhaba
Hospital	Mustashfa
How are you?	Kaif Halak?
How much?	Kem?
Left	Shamal
Market	Souk
Menu	Qa'imat At-ta'aam
Money	Nuquud
My name is...	Ismi
No	La
Please	Min Fudluk
Post Office	bareed
Right	Yameen
Sick	Mareed
Sorry	Aasif
Stop	kif
Street	Shari'a
Telephone	Hatif
Thank You	Shukran
Today	Al-yom
Tomorrow	Boukra
Water	Maa'
Welcome	Ahlan wa Sahlan
Where is?	Fane...?
Yes	Naam
Yesterday	Ams

ARMY RANKS

2ND LIEUTENANT

1ST LIEUTENANT

CAPTAIN

MAJOR

LIEUTENANT COLONEL

COLONEL

BRIGADIER GENERAL

MAJOR GENERAL

LIEUTENANT GENERAL

GENERAL

MULAZIM THANI

MULAZIM AWWAL

NAQIB

RA'ID

MUQADDAM

AQID

AMID

LIWA

FARIQ

FARIQ AWWAL

PRIVATE

PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS

CORPORAL/SPECIALIST

SERGEANT

1ST SGT/SGT MAJOR

JUNDI

JUNDI AWWAL

ARIF

RAQIB

RAQIB AWWAL

GROUND TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

From JS Guide 5260 "Service Members Personal Protection Guide: A Self-Help Handbook to Combating Terrorism," July, 1996.

PARKING

- Always lock your car.
- Don't leave your car on the street overnight, if possible.
- Never get out without checking for suspicious persons. If in doubt, drive away.
- Leave only the ignition key with a parking attendant.
- Don't allow entry to the trunk unless you are there to watch.

ON THE ROAD

- Before leaving buildings to get into your vehicle, check the surrounding area to determine if anything of a suspicious nature exists. Display the same wariness before exiting your vehicle.
- Prior to getting into a vehicle, check beneath it. Look for wires, tape or anything unusual.

- If possible, vary routes to work and home. Avoid late night travel.
- Travel with companions.
- Avoid isolated roads or dark alleys when possible.
- Habitually ride with the seatbelts buckled, doors locked, and windows closed.
- Do not allow your vehicle to be boxed in; maintain a minimum 8-foot interval between you and the vehicle in front; avoid the inner lanes. Be alert while driving or riding.

Know how to react if you are being followed:

- Circle the block for confirmation of surveillance.
- Do not stop or take other actions which could lead to confrontation.
- Do not drive home.
- Get description of car and its occupants.

- Go to the nearest safe haven.
- Report the incident to military/security police.

Recognize events that can signal the start of an attack, such as:

- Cyclist falling in front of your car.
- Flagman or workman stopping your car.
- Fake police or government checkpoint.
- Disabled vehicle/accident victims on the road.
- Unusual detours.
- An accident in which your car is stuck.
- Cars or pedestrian traffic that box you in.
- Sudden activity or gunfire.

Know what to do if under attack in a vehicle.

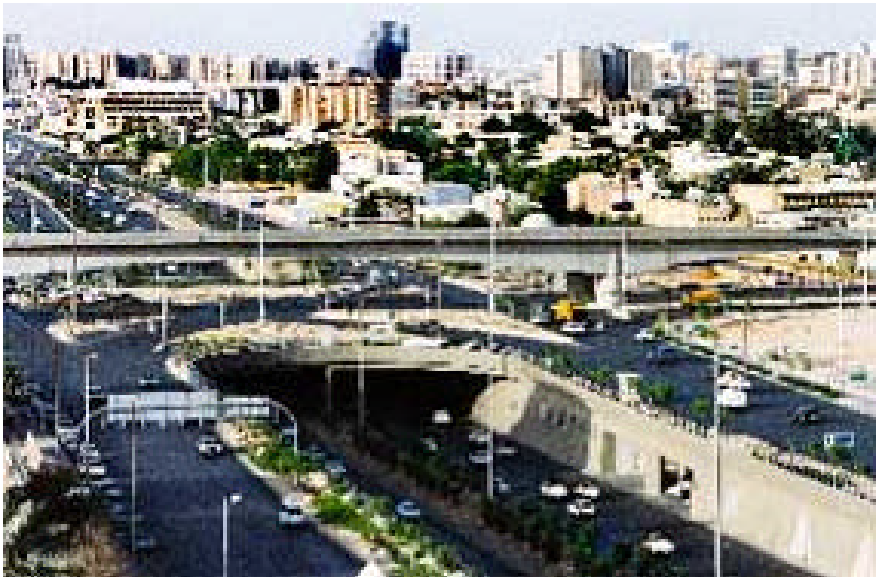
- Without subjecting yourself, passengers, or pedestrians to harm, try to draw attention to your car by sounding the horn.
- Put another vehicle between you and your pursuer.

- Execute immediate turn and escape; jump the curb at 30-45 degree angle, 55 KPH maximum.
- Ram the blocking vehicle if necessary.
- Go to the closest safe haven.
- Report incident to military/security police.

VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

ACCIDENT PROCEDURES: In the event of a vehicle accident, the occupants may render first aid to the accident victims provided that they are competent to do so without causing further injury to the victims. The vehicle operator must comply with the following procedures:

- A. Inform the ARCENT-SA G-3 Operations Center about the accident as soon as possible, and follow up by submitting to the G-3 a full report concerning the circumstances of the accident as soon as possible.
- B. Within 24 hours of the accident, notify the Command Judge Advocate of the accident, so that Foreign Claims procedures can be initiated.
- C. Do not depart the accident area until cleared to do so by the U.S. Military Police or Saudi Police responding to the accident.



Riyadh has a modern highway system, but driving in Saudi Arabia can be very nerve-racking